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## BAR ONE.

It was within a few days of June. The most sanguine barbarians had finally abandoned all hope of any more skating. The east wind had been put under arrest. The Queen of the May was rapidly recovering from her inflammation of the lungs; and the blessed sun had at last torn himself away from his favourite haunts amongst the blameless Ethiopians.

Moreover, it was the last Wednesday in May; and thereby hangs a tale.

It had not yet struck 8 A.M. by Shrewsbury clock, but already there was plenty of stir on the road between Clapham and Balham. The morning was lovely, and promised a lovely day; and along the dusty highway, in the direction of the pleasant village of Sutton, toiled even at this early hour quite a noticeable number of people on foot, and in vans and other vehicles drawn by lineal descendants of Rosinante. The pace, therefore, was slow and sober, if not stately, and calculated to command the approval of the Quakers and Puritans who, as some authorities affirm, form the aboriginal nucleus of the Claphamite population. Here and there, on both sides of the road, are cottages which, though they have no double coach-house, are yet cottages of gentility, and, though they are not devoid of modest ornament, suggest nothing of the pride that apes humility. They are the sort of snuggeries inhabited by those simple and yet daring folks who fly in the face of everybody but Providence, and marry with even the mystic three hundred a year looming, as a desirable object of future attainment, in the distance. The distance had been traversed, and the object had been attained by the couple who lived in the very prettiest nest amongst all the neighbouring snuggeries. George Stanhope Brown had for three years been in the enjoyment of what had once been his highest ambition: for three years he had reaped all the honours and emoluments attached to his office of manager in a certain commercial establishment—that is, he had sat in a private room all by himself, had issued

orders and received communications, preceded by a whistle like that of a railway-engine, in a hollow and sepulchral voice, by means of a gutta-percha tube, and had drawn the firm's extremest salary of three hundred a year. Partly from the necessity of distinguishing one Brown from other by no means rare holders of the same honoured name; partly from the obsequiousness of his subordinates; partly from a custom observed by his acquaintances, who didn't like to be thought to know one of your common Browns; partly from his own natural love of euphony; and partly, perhaps, from personal vanity, he had for some years past signed himself, and let it be understood that he expected to be spoken to and of as Stanhope Brown. Latterly, he had boldly introduced a hyphen; and even on his visiting-cards his name appeared as Stanhope-Brown. Some people, amongst whom were his employers, laughed in their sleeves (and openly to one another) at this innovation; but Mrs Stanhope-Brown liked it, and so did most of her and her husband's circle of acquaintance. A hyphen, one would think, can't do any harm; and it is a common mistake to confound *post hoc* with *propter hoc*. However, it is quite certain that what had contented the late Mr G. S. Brown and his wife, failed to content the new-blown Mr and Mrs Stanhope-Brown. So much was evident from the conversation which was going on among the little party assembled round their breakfast-table, at a quarter before 8 A.M., on the lovely morning, already alluded to, of the last Wednesday in a certain month of May.

'Can't you manage it anyhow, George?' asked a jolly-looking man with the stamp of the country on every streak of his ruddy face.

'He could, if he would, I'm sure,' broke in a pretty, buxom woman of five-and-thirty.

'Everybody else goes, but George is so conscientious,' added a still prettier but more delicate-looking woman, younger and more lady-like than the former speaker, but in other respects that speaker's double.

'Oh, do come, that's a dear old dad!' cried a

handsome little boy, ten years old, yellow of hair, blue of eye, and pink of cheek.

'Do you want to drive me mad?' pettishly exclaimed the person addressed. 'You know I'm a nigger-slave. The partners can go, and the junior clerks can go—or at least some of 'em; but the manager must be at his desk every day of every month.'

'Bar one, George,' said the ruddy man with a grin.

'Ah, I do get a month's holiday, I admit,' rejoined the other petulantly; 'and,' he added more cheerfully, 'thanks to you, I enjoy it.'

'Bother the thanks,' said the ruddy man bluntly; 'you're always welcome at the old mill. But we shan't see you this autumn, Bessy tells me; you're off to Jericho or somewhere, like the fashionable folks.'

'That depends,' said Mr George Stanhope-Brown with dignity.

'The old mill's not good enough for you, I suppose, George,' remarked the ruddy man in a frank, hearty tone; and the buxom woman, who was his wife, laughed good-humouredly.

Mr Stanhope-Brown and the somewhat delicate-looking woman, who was his wife, and the handsome boy, who was their sole offspring, all protested together.

'Don't talk rubbish, James,' said Mr Stanhope-Brown with a slight air of confusion.

'James, you're very unkind,' exclaimed Mrs Stanhope-Brown, bridling and looking hurt.

'Stainesford Mill's the jolliest place in the world, Uncle James,' roared the youngster lustily.

The miller looked pleased, but puzzled.

'If there's nothing the matter with the old mill, then,' he bellowed, 'and it's as pleasant for you to come as it is for us to have ye (and I know we look forward to it as *our* treat), why, in the name of patience and the patriarch Job, should you go off to Jericho?'

'Nearly all the people we know here go abroad somewhere,' insinuated Mrs Stanhope-Brown.

'More fools they, Mary,' rejoined the stout miller. 'Your sister and I are older than you and your husband, and we never wanted to leave what's the best country out, with all its faults. Did we, Bess?'

'I never did; I can't answer for *you*,' replied the buxom Bessy. 'Perhaps it's that very desire of getting away from home which is wearing you down so.'

At this sally, the jolly miller, who weighed some two-and-twenty stone, winked and chuckled approvingly for full a minute, during which Mrs Stanhope-Brown had thought of something to say.

'You see, James,' she said coaxingly, addressing Mr Tamlin, the miller, 'we want to personally visit some schools in Switzerland. We think of sending our little George to school there, education is so much cheaper abroad than in England.'

'And so it ought to be,' said the miller, grinning; 'they tell me it's a darned sight nastier. But d'ye mean to say you'll put all them seas and I don't know what else between yourselves and an only child? Why, God bless my soul!'

Mrs Stanhope-Brown looked furtively at her husband, who answered for her.

'Well, Mary didn't like the notion at all at first, but she listened to reason. You see, James, we have nowadays such quick and easy means of

communication, that it really makes very little difference whether your school is in a remote part of England, or on the continent.'

'And so much more attention is paid to manners abroad,' sniggered Mrs Stanhope-Brown.

'Poor lad! poor lad!' said the miller compassionately. 'No cricket nor nothing; only dominoes, they tell me. Well, well; I reckon your month's outing 'll cost a sight o' money, eh?'

'You can't travel for nothing, certainly,' answered Mr Stanhope-Brown evasively; 'but all my little ventures have lately turned out pretty well—all, bar one.'

'Oh! you got hit once, then,' suggested the miller.

'It's not certain yet whether I have or not,' rejoined Mr Stanhope-Brown carelessly.

'You dabble a little in them funds,' remarked the miller disparagingly, 'and yet you never will make a bet—even on a certainty.'

Mr Stanhope-Brown smiled feebly and shook his head.

'I always put a ten-pun note on every big race,' said the miller confidentially—'it gives you an interest in the thing; and, on the whole, I'm not out o' pocket. I get very good information. You'd better give me a tanner, and let me put it on for you when I get down to the course.'

'No, no; thank you,' answered Mr Stanhope-Brown decisively.

'I'm sure George will not do anything of the kind,' cried Mrs Stanhope-Brown with moisture in her eyes and a flush on her cheek: 'he hasn't so many ten-pound notes to spare as you have, James.'

Mr Stanhope-Brown shook his head once more; and the miller laughed good-naturedly.

'Do you know what the betting is this morning, George?' asked the latter.

'I don't understand it,' answered Mr Stanhope-Brown fretfully: 'here's the paper.'

'Oh! 3 to 1 bar one,' said the miller eagerly, after a glance at the quotations.

'Bar one!' exclaimed Mr Stanhope-Brown, as if he were puzzled, in a loud and excited voice.

'Yes,' replied the miller patronisingly; 'bar *Max*, of course. You can get 3 to 1 against any hoss you fancy except *Max*. But, bless you, it's a certainty; he's been going up in the betting every day, and I put my tanner on him when it was 10 to 1 against him.'

'Then, if you'd put ten tenners on, you'd have stood to win a thousand pounds, besides getting back your hundred,' said Mr Stanhope-Brown with an air of interest.

'Less the commissioner's percentage, and unless you hedged,' assented the miller: 'but you have to go in for the regular book-making business for that sort of thing, and that wouldn't suit either you or me.'

'Decidedly not,' said Mr Stanhope-Brown emphatically: 'why, you could hardly keep your transactions concealed, and your character as a steady man of business would be gone.'

'You speak like a book, George,' rejoined the miller, laughing: 'just bet once on one horse, and stick to him. If you lose one time, you'll win another. All you have to do is to write to a proper sort of commissioner, and even your own wife,' he added, winking at Mrs Tamlin, 'needn't know anything about it, unless you like.'

'I had a curious dream last night,' said Mrs

Tamlin, 'I suppose in consequence of your talking so much about this race just before we went to bed. I saw the whole race as distinctly as if I had been there and wide awake.'

'Did 'ee, now!' exclaimed the miller with a broad grin. 'Tell us what you saw; that's a good woman.'

'I saw about thirty or more horses, with riders looking like harlequins and what-not, all going round and round, and jumping about at the bottom of a hill with white railings on each side of it; and all of a sudden away they went up the hill as if they'd been shot from a catapult'—

'That was the start,' interrupted the miller, rubbing his hands with glee.

'They were all in a cluster at the top of the hill,' continued Mrs Tamlin, 'and then they turned to the left, and I lost sight of them for a few seconds'—

'The bushes hid 'em,' broke in the miller.

'When I saw them again,' proceeded Mrs Tamlin, 'they were broken up into fours, and threes, and twos, streaming along in a crooked line: then they turned sharp to the left again, and rushed down a fearful hill close by some more white railings'—

'Tattenham Corner,' roared the miller.

'And, just as the leaders were turning the corner, one of the horses—the one nearest the rails—seemed to slip up and fall with a frightful crash. All the others went on like a flash of lightning, and, about a hundred yards before they reached a sort of sentry-box, in which I could see nothing but a man's hat, one horse jumped right away from the other three that had been in front, and they never caught him, so I suppose he won. At any rate, he was brought back in custody by a mounted policeman, and was taken, with his rider, into some place near the sentry-box.'

'Ah! he won, safe enough,' roared the miller. 'But I reckon now you couldn't tell us what colour he was, and what his rider's colours were?'

'He seemed to me,' said Mrs Tamlin quietly, 'to be a very dark-coloured horse, and his rider looked like a chimney-sweep with a white night-cap on.'

'It was *Moz*, by gum,' observed the miller solemnly: 'he's a very dark bay horse, and his rider's colours are black and white cap. And how about that un that fell, my dear?'

'I only tell you what I dreamt, mind,' answered Mrs Tamlin, with the half-deprecatory, half-patronising air of a person who has had an unexpected triumph; 'but I have it impressed upon my mind that it was a beautiful cream-coloured creature'—

'Never *was* a race-hoss that colour, and never will be,' sneered the miller, contemptuously interrupting.

'Well, it may have been chestnut,' resumed Mrs Tamlin with less confidence; 'but I know the rider wore a red jacket and black cap, something like the Queen's outriders.'

'That'll do,' said the miller reflectively; 'it was *Beggarman*. And now,' he added, slapping his thigh, 'I attach so much importance to dreams, especially when I can account for 'em by the pickles you took and the stories I told you last night, that I'll be darned like an old stocking if I don't put an extra ten-pun note on *Beggarman* as soon as I have settled you all right at Epsom.'

'And I attach so much importance to dreams,'

cried Mr Stanhope-Brown, so violently as to make the jolly miller start and look serious, 'that I think you'll be an infernal fool.'

'Why? If you were going to bet,' said the miller anxiously, 'would you still back *Moz*?'

'I'll stake my life on him,' answered Mr Stanhope-Brown.

'The betting-men would rather have your money,' remarked the miller smiling: 'I don't know that they'd object to take both, but they'd prefer the money.'

'I must be off,' was Mr Stanhope-Brown's rejoinder: 'we've been chattering for an hour, and I shall hardly catch my train. Make yourselves as happy as you can without me,' he added with a sad smile.

'You'll be home by seven, George,' his wife called after him.

'If I live,' he replied.

'He always says that,' remarked Mrs Stanhope-Brown to her sister.

'He seems very low this morning,' was the rejoinder: 'I'm so sorry he couldn't go with us.'

'Oh! he is so good,' replied Mrs Stanhope-Brown: 'he wouldn't stay away for the world, unless he were ill; the firm speak so highly of him; and I do so hope his last little speculation may turn out well—he is so anxious to see a little of foreign life.'

'He said all his little ventures had been successful "bar one,"' remarked Mrs Tamlin.

'Yes,' said Mrs Stanhope-Brown, 'that is the one. I don't know what it is, as I don't understand funds and that sort of thing.'

And so they conversed, whilst Mr Tamlin and George were watching at the window, round which the pretty creeper climbed, the pedestrians and the vehicles growing every minute more numerous and noisy, and incompatible with the ordinary habits of the aboriginal denizens of Clapham.

At 11 A.M. there drove up to Mrs Stanhope-Brown's cottage a wagonette with a pair of good horses. Hampers were put in; blue veils were assumed by Mr and Mrs Tamlin, Mrs Stanhope-Brown, and little George; and away they went in grand style to the Derby. It was the jolly miller's principal holiday; he always insisted, to use his own language, upon 'standing the trap'; and the only drawback to his enjoyment of his great annual festival was, that he never could induce his dutiful brother-in-law to take part in the Epsom carnival.

Meanwhile, Mr Stanhope-Brown was seated at his desk in his own room, doing all the work there was to do on the Derby-day; and that was, apparently, to walk about and bite his nails. He had been grievously annoyed on his railway-journey, and on his walk from the station to the office; for his ears had caught nothing but a buzzing sound in which no words were clearly distinguishable but '*Moz*' and '*Bar one*.' Until nearly two o'clock he paced the floor of his private room, and then he went out to luncheon.

About the same time, at Epsom, his relatives were at the height of their enjoyment. The miller, as good as his word, had at the earliest opportunity gone off to put his 'tenner' on *Beggarman*. He was not a member of the 'ring,' and he had therefore been delighted to find an affable man presiding at a board on which was the name of Podex; for Podex was the name of the miller's own commissioner, and the affable man at once replied, in

answer to a question, that 'it was all one and the same firm,' and volunteered to give the jovial miller, as an old customer, a 'pint' over. The 'pint' was not liquid measure, but, otherwise pronounced, a 'point' over the odds. So the miller returned rejoicing to his relatives; and they all made a hearty meal, with a good many libations of champagne, to prepare them for the imminent Derby. There had been some change in the betting. There were voices shouting 'Three to two on the field,' and 'Two to one bar one;' and Stentor and Leviathan were proclaiming, at the risk of breaking a blood-vessel, their earnest desire to 'bet against *Max*;' but they wouldn't offer more than three to two, though occasionally a queer-looking customer, who, even if he were not a native of the Principality, bore the lineaments of a Welsher, was liberal enough (as money was no object to him) to offer a sovereign to 'anybody to make a bet,' and an additional 'alf-pint' over the odds. At last the course was cleared; the dog was driven mad; the dust-cloud was raised; hats were taken off; the sea of faces heaved and roared; the hoofs thundered and the colours flashed; the crowd closed in behind the horses as they passed; the winner's number was duly hoisted; and the miller's wife read 'No. 7.'

'*Beggarman's* won,' roared the excited miller; 'but dang me if I didn't think it was *Squoggles*; at anyrate, it was too near to be pleasant.'

Babel at once set in and continued, and in the midst of it all the worthy miller went in search of the affable man who professed to represent Podex & Co. But Affability's place knew him no more; the man and the board had vanished together; and the only information the miller could obtain was coldly imparted in two words: 'Ooked it.'

'I see 'im getting ready to step it,' remarked a policeman, grinning, 'jest as the 'osses passed the distance-post with *Beggarman* a-pullin' double.'

The miller returned chop-fallen to his party, but with the assistance of champagne he soon recovered his spirits.

'Twenty pounds gone,' said he with rueful grimace at his wife. 'Well, twenty pounds won't break me; but if ever I set eyes on that infernal Welsher, I'll break every bone in his skin.'

'Ah!' said the two sisters reproachfully, 'George was wise; he never bets.'

'Stuff!' growled the miller: 'you women would ha' been the first to crow if I'd brought the money back wi' me. It ain't betting, it's swindling that lost me my twenty pounds.'

The handsome little boy had been looking wonderingly from one to another.

'You'll never bet, George, will you?' said his mother, drawing him close to her.

'Not I,' replied the boy laughing; 'I'll be like dad.'

The miller looked a little disconcerted, and drew attention to the fact that the horses were coming out for the next race; and the whole party became absorbed in the proceedings, and divided their time between watching preliminary canters, and breaks away, and downright racing, amidst an uproar caused by Ethiopian melodists, mountebanks, and the like, until the last event was decided. Then they set out for home with little George as happy as a king; for round his cap were stuck innumerable dolls; on what pugilists call his 'smeller' was a false nose of gigantic size; and in his two hands

were two wind-instruments, which he used alternately for the production of sounds delicious to boys and pandemoniacs. By half-past 6 P.M. they had reached the pretty cottage, between Balham and Clapham, in a condition which the miller acknowledged was appropriate to his calling.

Before 4 P.M. there had been gathered together in front of certain shop-windows in the City many clusters of men, women, boys, and girls, all waiting for the appearance of a little piece of paper. It is probable that not one in twenty of the gazers had any pecuniary interest in what they were so anxious to see; nor, from the artistic point of view, is there much to look at in a piece of foolscap paper inscribed with three more or less outlandish names having appended to them respectively the first three numerals. And yet the human clusters could not have displayed greater eagerness had they been expecting the exhibition of a new painting by a great master, or of a live Claimant weighing something under a ton. But nowadays, with the help of the press, interest in anything gathers bulk, as does a snowball by continual rolling in the snow; so that it would not be wonderful if the whole world were to be divided into two hostile camps on the question of a family difference between two fleas, supported by their respective 'organs.' At anyrate, example is catching; and, whether a man 'has a bet on' or not, he is not singular if he stands amongst his fellow-creatures, and joins them in staring at a particular pane of glass.

There was nothing very remarkable, then, in the fact, that amongst one group of starers should be Mr George Stanhope-Brown. It was far more remarkable that, when the expected bit of paper was put up and bore the inscription '*Beggarman* 1, *Squoggles* 2, *Kick-the-bucket* 3—won easily by a length,' Mr Stanhope-Brown's neighbour should have uttered a cry of agony, and pushed him fiercely away, saying: 'What the devil are you a-doin' of?'

'Beg pardon,' said Mr Stanhope-Brown dreamily as he elbowed his way out of the throng.

'Beg pardon! I should think you did—pinchin' people like that,' roared the injured neighbour after him. 'Why, the man must be mad.'

Mad or not, Mr Stanhope-Brown sauntered leisurely along, looking very pale, and grinding his teeth together, inasmuch that a friend who met him cried: 'Hollo, Stanhope-Brown! you didn't back *Beggarman*, evidently. But I know you don't bet, old fellow. What's the matter? Tooth-ache?'

Mr Stanhope-Brown nodded.

'Then look here,' continued his friend: 'just you run over the way to Cory's, the chemist's. He gave me some rare stuff. Tell him I sent you.' 'Chemist's!' exclaimed Mr Stanhope-Brown, as if it gave him an idea. 'Ah! thanks—I'll go.'

And Mr Stanhope-Brown went not only to Cory's, but to several other 'chemist's;' and when he got back to his office, he said to the porter: 'I have some work that I must finish to-night, Peter. You can shut up as usual at five.'

'Very well, sir. Shall I get you some dinner?'

'No, thank you; I've had all the dinner I mean to have. That'll do.'

Peter retired, and Mr Stanhope-Brown shut himself up in his room, and set seriously to work.

Seven, eight, and nine struck, and Mr Stanhope-



Brown had not appeared at his pretty nest between Balham and Clapham. His tardiness had at first been put down to the general irregularity of everything on the Derby-day; but at last the sturdy miller determined to go and look after him.

It was about 11 P.M. when a boy rang at Mr Stanhope-Brown's house-door, and vanished like a gust of wind, after having gruffly whispered to the maid-servant who asked him his business: 'The old gent's a-waitin' for yer in the front garding.'

The girl had dashed after 'young impudence,' as she called him, when a well-known voice cried: 'Sarah, Sarah, my dear.'

'Lor, sir,' said Sarah, 'how you did frighten me!'

'Tell my wife,' said the miller, for it was he, shaking as if he had the palsy, 'to come out here to me at once. But where's your mistress?'

'She's up-stairs sitting by Master Georgy, who's feverish, and talking in his sleep.'

'Oh! then I had better go in.'

The miller went into the parlour, and at the sight of his face and his trembling limbs his wife sank down upon the sofa. 'For Heaven's sake, James,' she whispered, 'what is the matter?'

The miller went close to her, clung with nervous fingers to the framework of the sofa, and said two or three words in her ear.

Mrs Tamlin buried her face in her hands, and rocked herself to and fro.

Again the miller said two or three words in her ear, and again his wife gave way to a paroxysm of intense but almost soundless grief.

Footsteps were heard on the stairs; Mrs Stanhope-Brown came in with a smile on her face; and then, with one wild look at her sister and her brother-in-law, fell in a heap upon the floor.

'It was best so,' said Mrs Tamlin sadly, as she and her husband lifted the motionless form. 'When she recovers from her faint, she will have guessed the worst.'

'Not the worst,' said the miller in a hollow voice.

His wife shuddered, and hid her face.

Poor Mrs Stanhope-Brown was taken up-stairs and tenderly put to bed by Mrs Tamlin and Sarah; but it was nearly a week before she knew what was even then not the worst—before she knew that an inquest had been held, that no fewer than eight little bottles had been discovered on the desk in front of which her husband sat dead, and that a jury had declared (though she never knew with what difficulty some of them had been induced to assent to the declaration) that the deceased had destroyed himself in a state of unsound mind. And she never fully knew, or, at least, fully comprehended, the worst facts of the case, for the firm were kind to their manager's memory. They destroyed documents found in his desk which would have been a complete revelation. There was a letter from one Davy Jones, who called himself 'commission agent,' promised that the 'greatest secrecy' might be relied on; vaunted the 'certainty' of 'our outsider'; and, predicting that the aforesaid 'outsider' would be at 'odds on' by the day of the race, concluded by offering to anybody who would venture a couple of hundred pounds, or even less, that 'fortune' which Davy Jones was apparently too generous to win for himself at his own outlay; and there were vouchers, or papers of that kind, which proved that Davy Jones's list of 'successful predictions,' and 'boasts of 'private

information,' and tempting representations had, in the case of one who would have appeared at the first blush a most unlikely customer, made the enterprising Davy just so much 'to the good' as the firm discovered that they themselves were 'to the bad.'

Mr Stanhope-Brown had displayed a little of his usual caution; he had not, 'green' as he was at the business, recklessly backed Mox to win only, but had also taken the odds 1, 2, 3; and everybody agreed that Mox was as sure to be placed as the blessed sun to rise. For 'a place' it was said to be 'all Oxford Street to a Chiny orange;' and Stanhope-Brown, therefore, felt quite certain that he would at least be able to repay what he had 'borrowed' of the firm. You see, it was his first venture. But 'it is the first step which costs,' and the cost in his case was terrible, entailing death and disgrace, widowhood and orphanage, homelessness and pennilessness.

For of course the pretty nest at Clapham had, before many weeks were past, to be abandoned; and there was no provision for the mother and her son.

They paid their visit, earlier in the year than had been their custom, to Stainesford Mill; but the miller had a family of his own, and they could not make their home with him.

So one lovely autumn morning, when all the furniture had been removed from the snugery at Clapham, a delicate-looking woman and a handsome boy, a widow and an orphan, in mourning garments and with still more mourning faces, moved slowly out of the snugery's little garden and, casting many a lingering look behind, walked to the railway-station and took tickets—some-whither.

Their little bark was committed to the treacherous ocean of life, and there was none to steer it—bar One.

#### A POET'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

THE *Purgatory of Suicides* was, without doubt, a remarkable book to have been written by a self-educated man in jail; but it is not a high-class poem. The author, indeed, has evidently a better opinion of its merits, and would probably have considered himself a subject worthy of biography, on the ground of having written it, independently of any other claim to public attention; but, for our own part, we notice the *Life of Thomas Cooper*\* in these columns, not because he was a poet, nor even a Chartist, but as a curious example of how great diligence, even combined with a fair amount of intelligence, may fail to succeed in the world. If Mr Cooper had amassed two hundred thousand pounds in the funds, he would not have escaped canonisation at the hands of Mr Smiles, who would have shewn, by his example, that rising at four in the morning to study Butler's *Analogy*, a constant thirst for information, however foreign to the business of one's own life, and an indifference to social enjoyment, are certain to make a man at least wealthy—if not healthy and wise. Unhappily, however, Mr Thomas Cooper seems to have fulfilled these three hard conditions without receiving their golden meed, and has consequently had to write his biography himself.

In this undertaking he enjoys a considerable

\* *Life of Thomas Cooper.* Hodder and Stoughton.

advantage over persons similarly engaged who pique themselves on long descent: he has no ancestors to speak of, and, therefore, does not fill his opening pages with excerpts from the first leaf of the family Bible, and dreary particulars of vegetating squires. A recollection, probably, of what he has read in such works induces him to inform us that his mother's race "bore the old Saxon name of Jobson," and then, thank goodness, we have done with ancestry. His father was a wandering dyer, who died in 1809, when his only son was but four years old, and he left widow and child in very poor circumstances indeed. Thomas had been a beautiful child till the small-pox marred him, and, young as he was, he could feel the humbling change in grown-folk's manner towards him on that account. "I was no longer saluted cheerfully, and called 'Pretty boy';" some frowned with sour-natured dislike at my scarred visage, while others looked pitiful, and said: "Poor thing." There was change for the worse too in more important matters. 'Within doors, there was no longer a handsome room, the cheerful look of my father, and his little songs and stories. We had now but one chamber, and one lower room, and the last-named was at once parlour, kitchen, and dye-house: two large coppers were set in one part of it, and my mother was at work, amidst steam and sweat, all the day long for half of the week, and on the other half she was as fully employed in "framing," ironing, and finishing her work. Yet for me she had ever words of tenderness. My altered face had not unendured me to her. In the midst of her heavy toil, she could listen to my feeble repetitions of the fables, or spare a look, at my entreaty, for the figures I was drawing with chalk upon the hearthstone.' And the good widow and her child grew poorer still. Though a diligent and active woman, she could not pay her way, but, in addition to her very small dyeing establishment, had to work hard at making pasteboard boxes—then in general use among small tradesmen's wives, and for holding servants' clothes—in extra hours; and with these she would trudge from farmhouse to farmhouse, through all the country round, 'the smaller boxes within the large, often to the amount of twenty or thirty on her head.'

At one time, when the rent was due, the landlord being a hard man, she was thus trudging, with the child holding her apron by her side, when a notable circumstance, and especially to Thomas, took place. 'We were not half-way towards Lea, when we were met by Cammidge, a master chimney-sweeper, and his two apprentices bending under huge soot-bags. He began to try to entice my mother into an agreement for me to be his apprentice, and took out two golden guineas from his purse and offered them to her. She looked anxiously at them, but shook her head, and looked at me with the tears in her eyes; and I clung tremblingly to her apron, and cried: "Oh, mammy, mammy! do not let the grimy man take me away!" "No, my dear bairn, he shall not," she answered; and away we went—leaving the chimney-sweep in a rage, swearing, and shouting after my mother that she was a fool, and he was sure to have me, sooner or later, for that she could not escape bringing herself and me to the workhouse. My mother never went thither, however; nor did she ever ask parish help to bring me up.'

Matters improved indeed a little with the friendless pair, and Thomas was sent to the (provincial) Blue-coat School, and began to drink a little at those fountains of knowledge which were destined never to slake his thirst. The curriculum of study being much too limited for his omnivorous appetite, he took to painting animals (not very like), and to playing on the dulcimer, which he was taught by the father of the organist (for of course 'Tommy' was in the choir), 'a gentlemanly person,' remarks our author naively, 'though he had a wooden leg.' The boy was also devoted to natural history, and had the good fortune to behold, at one time, an entire field covered with glow-worms; at another, a *shower of live frogs*. 'I am as sure of what I relate as I am of my own existence. The minute frogs, jumping alive, fell on the pavement at our feet, and came tumbling down the spouts from the tiles of the houses into the water-tubs.' Up to this point in the autobiography, indeed, the reader ignorant of the *dénouement* would be equally prepared for Mr Thomas Cooper turning out to be a Landseer, a Mozart, or a Professor Owen.

And yet there seems to have been at Gainsborough at that time 'a mute inglorious Milton'—in the periwinkle line—still more worthy of Mr Smiles' notice than even Thomas Cooper. One of his school-fellows, Rob Mason, was from his cradle an adept in the art of making money, but the following feat was accomplished by him when at the mature age of nine. By creeping about the wharves by the Trent, and picking up bones and bits of old iron for sale, he contrived to amass the sum of fourpence. 'He then begged his passage to Hull, a distance of fifty miles, in the sailing-packet of that day; bought a bag of cockles with the fourpence; begged his passage (and the carriage of the cockles) back to Gainsborough; borrowed a wheel-barrow and a quatern measure, hawked his cockles about the town for sale, and realised half-a-crown.'

Thomas Cooper, alas! had no such gift for acquiring capital, and hard times came on again, when, thanks to Protection and the war-time, wheat flour rose to six shillings the stone, and meat was too dear to be thought of, and the widow and her boy found even potatoes difficult to get. Well may our author say that those years of war were terrific for the poor, notwithstanding that they shouted as loudly as their more fortunate neighbours when the express 'rode in with ribbons flying, bringing the news of another "glorious victory." At fourteen years of age, our precocious young friend joins the Primitive Methodists, and experiences 'an indescribable anguish and sorrow for sin. My grief continued many weeks, until I could find no delight in my books, or drawing, or dulcimer, and could read nothing but the Bible, and was getting into secret places twenty times a day, to pray for the pardon of my sins.' The preaching seems principally to have stirred young boys, just as homeopathy is said to affect most those who have least the matter with them; but many 'upgrown' persons were also moved, and 'I remember well an elderly man, an inveterate cock-fighter, being humbled, and becoming a true penitent.'

At fifteen, Thomas's mind 'rebels,' and he embraces the Wesleyan persuasion; and what perhaps was almost of as much consequence,

resolves to assist his mother's scanty gains by becoming a cobbler. 'On the 10th of June 1820,' records our self-conscious author, 'I sat down in Clark's garret, to begin to learn the art, craft, and mystery of shoemaking.'

Poetry, as everybody knows, is closely connected with the awl, and therefore we are not astonished that about this time our hero begins to make verses; but he also joins a Mutual Improvement Society, makes speeches in a debating club, and studies—what does the reader think?—Astrology and Divination! These last irrational themes, however, he soon discards, and becomes only too rational. A translation of Volney's *Ruins of Empires* shakes the young Wesleyan's faith to its foundations, and for a time he gives up going to meeting. What he does *not* read, in fact, would be almost more easy to set down than what he does read, so extensive is his range of literature; and among other books he gets hold of the life of one Dr Samuel Lee, a gentleman who, it seems, had the mastery of twelve languages. Whether he ever 'said anything worth hearing in any one of them,' does not appear; but the boy is fired by his example, and determines to learn every tongue that comes in his way. 'I thought it possible that by the time I reached the age of twenty-four, I might be able to master the elements of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French; might get well through Euclid, and through a course of algebra; might commit the entire *Paradise Lost*, and seven of the best plays of Shakspeare, to memory; and might read a large and solid course of history, and of religious evidences, and be well acquainted also with the current literature of the day. I failed considerably; but I sped on joyfully, while health and strength lasted. I was between nineteen and twenty when I began to commit Ruddiman's *Rudiments* to memory, thinking it was better to begin to learn Latin with the book that Lee used, though I found afterwards I might have done better. I committed almost the entire volume to memory—notes and all. Afterwards, I found Lyon's small Hebrew Grammar on a stall, bought it for a shilling, and practised Hebrew writing, as the surest means of beginning to learn, every Sunday evening. I got hold of a Greek grammar about a year after, but did not master it thoroughly, because I thought it better to keep close to the Latin for some time. I also picked up a small French grammar; but *that* seemed so easy, that I thought I could master it without care or trouble.'

Historical studies, or grammar, were his employment on week-day mornings, when he rose at three or four, till seven o'clock, when he sat down in his stall. A book or periodical 'in my hand while I breakfasted,' gave him another half-hour's reading, while from one to two o'clock he passed 'eating my food with a spoon after I had cut it to pieces, and having my eyes on a book all the time.' He worked at his trade till eight, and then commenced his studies in earnest, committing *Hamlet*, word for word, to memory, for one thing, which he repeated, as well as the propositions of Euclid, while making his shoes.

It is not to be wondered at, under these circumstances, that our hero's health utterly broke down, or that, when he regained it, it was only partially, so that he was unable to pursue his old trade, and had to adopt that of a schoolmaster, for which, indeed, though but just three-and-twenty, he was

far better suited. His teaching was eagerly sought by the poor, and in twelve months he had a hundred scholars on his list, and an average attendance of eighty. Here, then, as Mr Cooper himself confesses, was an opportunity for making himself independent, nor do we understand why he did not do so. As to his observation, that he 'could never suffer the purpose of making money to enter into his mind,' we must say that that seems to us a foolish affectation—as bad in its way as the purpose of making nothing else. Why he gave up teaching is not made very plain—though it is clear that that strange perversity which causes some men to give up whatever pursuit in which they are most successful, had something to do with it; for, just after a hint that the drudgery was beginning to bore him, he says: 'But I must go back to the great concern of all—that of Religion.' Under that name Mr Cooper is pleased to designate his frequent changes of faith, from howling Methodism down to bald infidelity, in every one of which positions he is equally convinced and positive that he is right, and not to be moved from it by miracles.

He now becomes a Wesleyan preacher, and after a short experience of a spiritual 'circuit,' is suspended from his vocation—one cannot quite see for what, which is disappointing. It would be rather a relief to find Mr Thomas Cooper out in an indiscretion, he is so desperately diligent and studious. Not until the age of twenty-five had he, for instance, ever spoken to an individual of the opposite sex, 'or even given her a glance of the eye, that could be called, in our Lincolnshire speech, taking "notice of her." In 1829, however, he marries, and thenceforth becomes happily less of a Prig. He gets made reporter on a local newspaper at Lincoln, beginning at a salary of twenty pounds a year, which is soon raised to one hundred pounds. It was in this capacity, and while attending a meeting of the town-council, that he 'conceived, as it seemed in a moment, the creation of either a drama or an epic, wherein the spirits of suicidal kings and other remarkable (suicidal) personages should be interpreters on some high theme. I resolved to call it the *Purgatory of Suicides*. I wrote down on one of the leaves of my reporting-book the names of Demosthenes, Hannibal, Brutus and Cassius, Cato, Nero, Achitophel, Judas Iscariot, and Castlereagh, and preserved the leaf. I also kept the title before me, and never thought of changing it for a moment.'

It is pleasant to discover something to which Mr Thomas Cooper stuck. He did not stick to his newspaper; but very characteristically, at the moment when its proprietor had raised his salary to two hundred and fifty pounds, with lodgings rent free, and coals gratis, threw up his situation, and started off with his wife (what must *she* have thought of him?) and some boxes of books, by coach, 'to make my first venture in London.' His available capital, at this time, consisted of a half-written romance, which he cannot persuade Sir Bulwer Lytton (for whose election he had worked at Lincoln) to ask Messrs Saunders and Otley to publish, and which no one will bring out for its own sake. What little money he had is soon exhausted, and he is at very low water-mark indeed. He 'tries to keep up his fragmentary reading of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and German'—for he had gone in for them all, including

*Arabic* (!) at Lincoln—until he had neither grammar nor dictionary left; they were all sold, and then he had to pawn his clothes. At this crisis he has the luck to hear of an advertisement for 'the whereabouts of Thomas Cooper, who wrote the articles entitled "Lincoln Preachers" in the *Stafford Mercury*;' and his reply to this procures him newspaper employment at Leicester, destined to be the scene of his Chartist doings. It is a sad story to read of the misery of the poor 'stockingers,' and of the starvation prices at which so many of our fellow-creatures were then compelled to work. There were cruel wrongs to be redressed, no doubt, though it is still open to dispute whether the carrying of the 'six points' of the charter would have made matters right. But the Leicestershire poor, at all events, had set their hearts on it, and would hear of nothing, even of Free-trade itself, until that was done. Mr Cooper, always, to do him justice, honest in his convictions, and always certain of them, as we know by this time, took up their cause, and became an 'agitator.' He started a short-lived newspaper—the one he had first joined discarded him for his political opinions—entitled the *Midland Counties Illuminator*, and 'took to the Stump,' as a Chartist orator, besides. Now it is all over, the whole affair seems tame and uninteresting enough, but it had its root in a general poverty, terrible indeed, since it was partly avoidable, and was for a time a serious source of disquiet to the state. To poor Mr Cooper, it was very serious indeed, since his advocacy of 'the people's cause' procured him an imprisonment in Stafford Jail. His 'gude conceit of himself' breaks out amusingly in his description of the trial. 'I do not think I ever spoke so powerfully in my life as during the last hour of that defence. The peroration, the Stafford papers said, would never be forgotten; and I remember, as I sat down, panting for breath and utterly exhausted, how Talfourd, and Erskine, and the jury sat transfixed, gazing at me in silence.'

However, the upshot was, that the poor fellow got two years for what certainly seems a very slight offence, if we may believe his own account. On the other hand, his imprisonment was not a severe one; and to it—for he was allowed books, and pen and ink—the world is indebted for the *Purgatory of Suicides*. 'On the night of the 10th June 1843, when we had been one month in jail, I felt suddenly empowered to make a start, and when I had composed the four opening lines, I found they rhymed alternately. It was a pure accident, for I always proposed to write my poem in blank verse. Now, however, I resolved to try the Spenserian stanza, though the two opening stanzas were the first I ever wrote in my life.' Unquestionably, Thomas Cooper's imprisonment did no harm to his reputation as a writer, but, on the contrary, brought his poem into notice. Everybody who knew the circumstances deemed he had been harshly dealt with; and when he came out of jail, the political crisis was past in which alone such a man could have been dangerous. Of the discords in the Chartist ranks, of their wretched squabbles and mean personal jealousies, we have said nothing. All politics are full of such: the Buckingham Papers describe matters just as vulgar, weak, and despicable, when the gilding is rubbed off them. The lesson to be learned by all young men of talent, in whatever

sphere, from the perusal of such works, is, to keep out of backstairs-plots and parliamentary intrigues. Let no man take up with politics, *as a trade*, unless he has a certain knowledge of what he is driving at, and that his object is a good one. If not, he is sure to become at best a bore, at worst a firebrand.

Once out of prison, our Chartist poet applies himself to Mr Disraeli—the only politician, strange to say, who befriends him—and even he can't get the *Purgatory of Suicides* published. However, it is done at last—dedicated, by the way, to Thomas Carlyle—and, upon the whole, is a success. It is no *Paradise Lost*, as we have hinted; but it is well worth looking into. After its publication, Mr Cooper becomes 'convinced' of the truth of the doctrines of Strauss, and delivers infidel lectures, concerning which he afterwards finds cause to write, 'There is no part of my public teaching which I regret so deeply.' He is at present, it seems, a champion of orthodoxy, a peripatetic lecturer on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, upon which desirable state of mind we heartily congratulate him.

If his book is not very interesting in itself, it contains some excellent teaching, none the worse because it is undesigned. Not only, as we have pointed out, does it shew that the position of a political agitator is, except in very rare instances, a most unsatisfactory trade, and one not to be lightly taken up by any man without a positive 'call' in that direction, but also that mere diligence and study are profitless without an aim. 'Jack of all trades, and master of none,' is a very homely phrase, but it is a true one, and has a much more general application than is supposed in these days of Cram and Omniscience. Moreover—though the remark has no reference to Mr Thomas Cooper, since he educated *himself*, and that with an assiduity and fervour in themselves most commendable—there is nothing more common than to educate men beyond their natural wits.

## A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE.

### CHAPTER IV.—AGAINST TIME.

LUNCH is good at all times, if you have but got the appetite for it. A mid-day meal, however stupid Fashion may flout it, with her late breakfasts and early kettle-drums, is Nature's requirement, for which more than the ten minutes 'guaranteed' by the railway companies at their refreshment stations should always be allowed. It is not a repast to be hurried over, standing at a counter with somebody waiting for your place. It is derogatory to its noble character to call it a snack, or to consider it as a stop-gap; for is it not the half-way house between breakfast and dinner which Providence has placed upon the high-road of daily life? At it, we are bound to make up for our deficiencies at the former meal, and to take no thought for the latter, but to eat as much as possible, and of the very best; for who of us is perfectly certain that he shall live to dinner-time? If it be but 'a biscuit and a glass of sherry,' it invigorates us more than a far more ambitious refectation at another time, and we are more thankful for it, though the formula of grace is dispensed with; while, if the lunch be on a scale commensurate with its opportuneness—iced Moselle cup



and a lobster mayonnaise, for example—and the spot chosen for its consumption be in a concatenation accordingly—in a gilded barge, moored to the river-bank, with the lapping water for music, and the smile of beauty for light— But the very idea of such a divine festival is rendering us as incoherent as though we had already partaken of it. Imagine, then, the gilded *Lotus* moored beside the towing-path that fringes an emerald mead, powdered by golden king-cups and giant daisies; the noonday sun is blazing down on the cabin roof, but all within is cool; the river-airs blow freely through the open windows; the table, clothed in white, is sparkling with glass and silver; and the song of birds mingles with the chirrup of the frequent cork. Charles (Arthur's man), having made the 'cup,' and delicately concocted the salad, has betaken himself with the other men across the stream to the public-house, a fairy bower decked with roses, and lying in the bosom of a wood. They likewise are doubtless at lunch, and so, beyond all question, is the unharnessed steed which crops the meadow without a scruple respecting the rights of property or laws of trespass. It is a time when even the most orthodox ask themselves whether human nature is after all so bad, or its 'look-out' so exceedingly uncomfortable, as the theologians describe it to be. The discordant elements that have already evinced themselves in our little company during their river-voyage, are hushed; the oil and vinegar are, for the present, mixed as harmoniously as in the salad bowl.

'Now, this is what I call the best part of it all,' exclaimed Mrs Somers emphatically, poisoning a bit of chicken on her fork, and regarding these bright surroundings.

'Do you mean the liver-wing, mamma?' inquired Helen roguishly.

'Well, yes, my dear, *that* is very good, and Arthur could not have helped me more to my liking. One of the things that has always puzzled me in life is why chickens should not have been made with two livers—the gizzard being so indigestible. But I meant the luncheon altogether, with our pretty look-out upon the woods, and swans, and things.'

'Take some lobster, my dear madam,' said Mr Jones; 'you'll find it rhymes to chicken beautifully.'

'Stuff and nonsense,' Mr Jones; 'I mayn't be a poet, but I know better than that. Chickens rhymes to pickings, and very pretty pickings they are. Well, since you are so pressing, I *will* have a piece of lobster; though, perhaps, it's hardly prudent.'

'She is thinking of the fate of the deputy-recorder,' observed Mr Paul Jones, whose face had already disappeared pretty often in the ample tankard of Moselle cup.

'Don't you be too confident, mister,' returned the old lady tartly. 'When the boat begins to wobble again, you'll be none too comfortable, unless I'm much mistaken. By-the-by, what makes those lily-buds bob about so, child?'

'Hush, mamma; they are not lily-buds,' whispered Helen; 'they are ducks diving.'

'Lawk-a-mercy, so they are!' said Mrs Somers, putting up her double gold eye-glasses. 'I wonder they don't get blood to their head.'

At this, despite all politeness, natural or acquired, the whole party could scarcely restrain their mirth; the ducks in their inverted position did really look so very like lily-buds. Jack Adair fled to the

tankard, in hopes to hide in its contents any expression of disrespect towards Miss Helen's mamma; but, unhappily, it had a glass bottom, through which his countenance was revealed to that lady with shocking distinctness: he caught her eye, and fled to the bows of the barge in roars of laughter. Peal on peal, they issued from his stentorian lungs, as he lay on the deck, and gesticulated—it was thought towards the ducks—with frantic earnestness.

'The man's mad,' said Mrs Somers, red with rage and lobster. 'What makes him laugh so?'

'The gee—the gee—the *horse*,' stammered Jack; and off he went again into a fresh paroxysm. All looked towards the bank; and lo, making his way towards the horizon, and already two fields away, trotted their faithless steed!

He had mistaken some movement on board the boat for a command to resume his journey, and there he was joggling leisurely on, doubtless under the impression that he had the rope attached to him, and was giving every satisfaction to his employers of which horse-power is capable. Then everybody roared together, including even the Honourable Wynn Allardyce, who, though he had a thin acid wit of his own, was not very susceptible of a joke.

'Paul, you must fetch the horse,' said he, peremptorily, as soon as he could speak.

'The horse be blowed!' returned Mr Paul Jones. 'Why should I fetch the horse?'

'Because the horse is blowed,' answered his friend coolly; 'we should not have expected it of you, had he been a fresh one.'

'Why shouldn't he go?' remonstrated Mr Jones, motioning towards Adair; poor Paul was stout, and abhorred exercise of all kinds.

Allardyce, however, whispered a few words hurriedly into his ear, when off started his henchman, reluctantly enough, but at a good round trot, which was his best pace.

'I should think Jones had scarcely ever run since he was a boy,' observed Arthur.

'Except to seed,' said Allardyce drily; 'certainly never after a horse. I'll bet he catches him, however.'

'That is equivalent to saying you will bet Jones don't have a fit. The horse must stop sooner or later, when he comes to a shut gate.'

'Well, I tell you what I'll do, Tyndall; I'll take ten to one he rides him home!'

'The deuce you will! Let me quite understand you. Will you take ten to one in pounds that our fat friend will mount that bare-backed steed, and ride him home?'

'Oh, dear me, they're going to bet!' exclaimed Mrs Somers uneasily.

'Let us say shillings instead of pounds before the ladies,' whispered Allardyce hurriedly: 'I'll take you in fivers, if you like.'

'Very good,' returned Arthur aloud. 'If pounds is too much, let us say crowns.'

'That is better,' said Mrs Somers approvingly. 'But why not bet in postage-stamps? That is quite enough for amusement.'

'Stop a bit, Tyndall; I can afford to give you a point better,' said Adair. 'I'll take your nine to one.'

'It's fivers, Jack,' whispered Arthur.

'I thought so,' said Adair coolly. 'But nevertheless I'll take the bet.'

'I had no idea you were such a sporting character,' said Arthur with unfeigned surprise. 'Well, Allardyce, he's spoiled your market, unless you undersell him.'

'I'll take your eight to one,' answered Allardyce, keeping his eyes fixed on Paul's retreating figure; 'eight crowns to one.'

'I'll take five,' said Jack.

'Adair must be mad,' remarked Allardyce, 'or have more money than he knows what to do with.' His tone was careless enough, but his brow was knit, and his lips were pressed closely together.

'Five crowns to one with you, then, Jack,' said Arthur; 'though I had rather it had been Allardyce's money,' he added in a lower tone.

Jack chuckled with even more than his usual zest. 'It is you who will lose, my dear fellow. Look, look at the Pirate; he has neared the chase, and fired a shot across his bows.'

Mr Paul Jones had, in fact, come up with the runaway horse, and was throwing stones apparently at its nose—it was a quiet and inoffensive animal enough, with almost a too delicate sense of duty, as we have seen—but he was afraid to take hold of its bridle. At last he accomplished this dangerous feat, and stopped it.

'Bravo, Jones! Now, get up,' said Jack approvingly.

'He never will—he never can,' said Arthur. 'To him it is a Tartar of the Ukraine breed.'

'Never mind that; you don't know his courage, and you underrate his activity, my dear fellow.—Mrs Somers, Miss Helen, here is a spectacle.'

Thus adjured, the ladies came out of the cabin to watch it. Instead of leading back the animal, as Mr Jones might certainly have been expected to do, he was making the most frantic efforts to mount him. Twice he got half-way up, and twice the noble steed wheeled round, and off he slipped again; the third time, he succeeded so far as to establish an equilibrium; half his body remained on one side of the horse, and half on the other, like a sack of corn. Perhaps the clatter of the stirrups, as he strove to introduce his foot in one of them, alarmed the creature, or perhaps it caught sight of the barge, which suggested to it that it had deserted its post, but off it started at a canter. Nothing of the sort had ever given so much general satisfaction since Richard III. had returned in similar fashion from the field of Bosworth; but Mr Jones had the advantage of that monarch in the matter of vitality; he was very literally alive and kicking; and as he drew nearer, could be heard apostrophising the powers of darkness, and consigning the good steed that bore him, to perdition, just as though it had been a fellow-creature of his own species. All were much too exhausted with laughter to rescue him, except Allardyce, whose face wore only a sardonic smile, which did not give much promise of assistance; but fortunately for the victim, his Rosinante stopped of its own accord beside the barge, and began to crop the herbage. Then Mr Paul Jones rolled off, and sitting on the ground, regarded his unsympathising friends with reproachful hate.

'I think you might have stopped that beast of a horse, instead of giggling, some of you,' muttered he vaguely.

'I am sure I wish they had,' said Tyndall, wiping away the tears of laughter from his eyes; 'for you've cost me five-and-twenty pounds.'

'Cost you *what*, Arthur?' cried Mrs Somers excitedly.

'Five-and-twenty crowns; I mean five-and-twenty shillings,' said Tyndall, floundering a little in his arithmetic, for he was not used to cooking his accounts.

'Was it really pounds or shillings, Mr Allardyce?' inquired Helen in a low voice.

'You had better ask Mr Adair,' answered he, in the same confidential tone. 'He is all candour and veracity, you know. As for me, I am a wicked gambler, as I daresay he has told you.'

'He has told me nothing; but I like people to be open in what they do, even if it is bad.'

Allardyce stole a glance at her of admiration mingled with humility. 'I am not used to such noble natures,' said he, and sighed.—'Well, Paul, you are not hurt, I hope?'

'Yes, I am,' said the object of his doubtful solicitude, rubbing himself in sundry places. 'I am shaken to pieces.'

'Take a drop of brandy,' said Mrs Somers, good-naturedly forgetting her hostility to this fallen foe. 'That will settle your inside; and when you go to bed, get somebody to rub you with spirits.'

'And in the meantime, take some more lunch,' added Tyndall. 'If there are any ribs broken, there is nothing like filling them up. Here is a galantine of turkey that will be just the thing. Come, let us all resume our duties.—Jack, make some more cup; there's a good fellow.'

Helen looked at Jack as though he were by no means a good fellow, and even at her Arthur with some displeasure; but she sat down again at table with the rest without remark. The interrupted repast, which had indeed but just been begun, was recommenced, and good Humour (hand-maid to Lunch) reassumed her reign. If Mr Paul Jones was somewhat mercilessly rallied upon his recent Great Act of Equitation, he bore it in good part; he talked unceasingly; the brandy and cup combined brought out in him a hateful characteristic—a hankering to stand up and make speeches: he wished to propose Tyndall's health, and if that desire had not been sternly repressed by the object of his enthusiasm, would, without doubt, have 'begged permission to couple with it that of the lovely mistress of the ceremonies, *need he say* Miss Helen Somers.' The instincts of the commercial traveller were terribly strong in him, and liquor stirred them within him. Jack Adair looked at him as though it would presently become incumbent on him, as Arthur's nearest friend, to put this little man in the river. That most excellent gift, Tolerance, is, however, one of the first-fruits of a pleasant meal, and Mr Paul Jones' vulgarity, which an hour ago would have caused disgust, now only excited mirth. Allardyce, at first ashamed of his companion, now regarded him with patronising favour, as though he were the proprietor of this curious animal, whose gambols so amused the company.

'Permit me,' said Mr Jones, 'to sing a song.' This was met by a scornful refusal. 'Allow me, then, to propose a sentiment.' This desire was also cruelly denied to him. 'Then,' said Mr Jones resolutely, 'I will tell you a story.' And amid shrieks of laughter, this little boon was granted to him.

'Only take care, for goodness' sake, Jack, what he does tell,' whispered Arthur.

'All right,' said Jack; and he kept his large right hand just behind Mr Paul Jones' neck, so that he might compress his windpipe on the instant, should his selection of subject for narration be unfit for lady's ear.

'I'll bet you a pair of gloves, Helen,' said Arthur, in lover's tones, and while the little man arranged his ideas, 'that it will be about his cousin the Attorney-general of Sierra Leone—a connection of which he is unreasonably proud.'

'I am not so fond of betting as some people,' was Helen's cold reply.

Tyndall bit his lip; and Allardyce, whose eye saw there was something amiss between them, though his ear did not catch her words, laughed grimly in his sleeve.

'It's a most capital story that I am going to tell you,' commenced Mr Paul Jones confidently, 'and one of the best you ever heard. It happened to my cousin Herbert, who was Attorney-general for Sierra Leone in 1844. Sierra Leone is in Africa. My cousin went out there with the highest recommendations, as a very young man. I suppose nobody had ever been out with higher recommendations. Sir Charles Goadby was governor, and took him by the hand. He had immense talents as a pleader. My uncle George used to predict of him—and my uncle was an uncommonly shrewd fellow, living in the neighbourhood of Kingston-on-Thames'—

'We can't stand your uncle George,' observed Allardyce tartly; 'cut him out of the story.'

Everybody gave a little sigh of relief, and felt grateful to Allardyce; a sort of deadly calm had taken possession of Mr Jones' audience, which he attributed to enthralling interest; and he was irritated, therefore, at the interruption, not only on his own account, but upon theirs.

'You must let me tell the story my own way, or not at all,' said he peevishly.

'Not at all, then, by all means,' observed Allardyce coolly; but the ladies (always pitiful, and often mistaken in their pity) murmured: 'Oh, pray go on, Mr Jones;' and he went on.

'When, in consequence of his excellent introductions, and the help of Governor Sir Charles Goadby, my cousin had been made Her Majesty's Attorney-general for Sierra Leone, he decided upon giving a little dinner.'

'*Ridiculus mus*,' muttered Allardyce.

'I see nothing ridiculous in my cousin's giving a dinner-party,' remonstrated Jones.

'A "party!" no, my dear fellow; but you said "a little dinner." Considering his introductions, and all the rest of it, it ought to have been a banquet.'

'It was a banquet, sir,' urged Jones, asserting himself. 'All the beauty and fashion of—all the beauty and fashion of' ('Ally, Ally!' whispered the narrator earnestly, 'I've forgotten the name of the cursed place; it was your fault for interrupting me; do tell me')—'all the beauty and fashion of Sierra Leone were there. The room was decorated with all the luxurious vegetation that belongs to that tropical region. Fire-flies danced about. The moon, never so glorious as in that particular part of the world'—Mr Jones was growing ghastly pale, large drops were standing on his forehead, his very hair began to bristle.

'I knew that man would be ill,' murmured Mrs Somers, regarding him with horror.

'Where was I?' inquired Mr Jones wildly.

'At the moon,' replied the inexorable Allardyce.

'The moon, in that particular part of the world,' were your last words.'

Mr Jones gasped and nodded; you would have thought they had literally been his last words.

'If you are going to be ill, Jones, you'd better go out of the cabin,' whispered Allardyce.

'Don't, don't!' returned the other plaintively.

'O dear, I've forgotten something.'

'Your pocket-handkerchief! Here, by Jove! take mine, man,' cried Adair with good-natured promptitude.

'No, no; it's not that,' returned Mr Jones, rejecting the proffered loan with irascibility. 'Stop a bit. The moon was at the full. Through the open windows could be seen the heaving deep. The natives, in considerable numbers, were assembled beneath the balcony, beating tom-toms—beating tom-toms,' repeated the narrator with gentle pathos.

A simultaneous roar of laughter burst from the whole company, shaking the cabin and rocking the barge. Mr Paul Jones regarded this outbreak with a feeble smile; it is better to know that one has failed, than to be always on the brink of failure, with the certainty of falling over sooner or later.

'I have forgotten the point of the story, ladies and gentlemen,' said he, with a deprecating air; 'it's really the very best story you ever heard; please to give me one more chance.'

For the last quarter of an hour or so, the unhappy wretch had been talking against time.

#### CHAPTER V.—THE BARGEES.

Mr Jones' pathetic appeal was not acceded to, though a single effort was made in one quarter to give him 'one more chance.'

'I'll bet any man an even fiver,' said Arthur, 'that Jones don't recollect his "point" within ten minutes.'

The next moment he regretted his indiscretion; Helen, like the rest, had been convulsed with mirth at Mr Jones' discomfiture, but her lover's speech sobered her at once. Arthur Tyndall's love of gambling had been the one objection which her mother had entertained against him as a son-in-law; she had spoken of it to her daughter very seriously, and Helen had repeated her words to Arthur. He had promised her to reform in this respect; and yet, within one half-hour, or so, and in her mother's presence, he had made, or attempted to make, two wagers; and one of them, as it seemed to her, of a very considerable amount: he had also lost it, which, in a woman's eyes, greatly heightens the immorality of misdemeanours of that description. It was, to say the least of it, very thoughtless conduct on her Arthur's part; if he were restrained by no other motive, he might have refrained from such conduct for her sake.

'Mamma and I are not accustomed,' said she, 'to hear gentlemen betting fivers; it makes me nervous.'

'Nervous! It puts me all of a twitter!' ejaculated Mrs Somers. 'I really wish you wouldn't, Harthur.'

The aspirate was very marked.

Tyndall's sun-tanned face turned a whole shade darker. It was an indiscreet speech for Helen to make, especially aloud. It seemed to him that the woman to whose money he was about to be

indebted for restoration to his old position in society was already presuming upon that circumstance; if she lectured him *now* (before his friends too!), what would she not do when she became his lawful wife! He would not have cared so much about what her mother had said, if she had not put in that *H.* He had always thought to himself: 'She is a good-natured old lady, after all.'—But 'What a vulgar old woman this is!' was the idea, plain and bare, that now occurred to him. His nature was passionate, his feelings unaccustomed to the control even of himself, much more to the interference of others. He rose from the table, and walked out of the cabin. A dead silence fell upon all.

'You must not be angry with him, Miss Somers,' said Allardyce in a voice, sympathising, if not absolutely tender. 'He meant no harm; it is so difficult to get out of what has become an ingrained habit.'

Adair, who overheard this speech, as indeed did everybody but Arthur, regarded Allardyce with fiery scorn; and perhaps Helen herself resented it in her heart. If it had been Mr Paul Jones who had spoken it, she would have told him to mind his own business; but the incense of the herb valerian was grateful to her nostrils. She could not snap *that* up, or tread it under foot like a common weed. She kept silence, looking angrily out at Arthur standing in the bows with his back to them all; but her mother answered for her.

'Yes, indeed, dear Mr Allardyce, Arthur is much too fond of betting; that is the only fault he has. I do wish—as a friend whose advice I am sure he would value highly—you would persuade him to give it up.'

If Mrs Somers' vision could have penetrated through a ten-inch mahogany table, she would have here perceived Mr Paul Jones' finger and thumb meet facetiously in a fleshy part of the Hon. Wynn Allardyce's leg. But as it was, she only saw the latter gentleman shrug his shoulders and shake his head.

'I'm afraid he will find it as difficult to get rid of his taste for laying fivers, my dear madam, as Mr Jervoise, of Green Place yonder, found it to get rid of his wife.'

'Where is Green Place? Oh, that house on the hill, is it?'

'Yes; and a very strange story there is attached to it, if you'd care to hear it.'

Mrs Somers did not in the least care to hear it; but anything was better than the icy silence in which the company was plunged. It was only too obvious that her future son-in-law was offended: he was pulling at a great cigar so savagely that, at a little distance, you might have taken the barge for a steam-yacht; and she was very anxious to conciliate him.

'Come, Arthur,' said she cheerfully, 'and listen to Mr Allardyce's story. He says it is a very strange and interesting one.'

'Jones promised the same for his, madam,' answered Arthur, with a short laugh. 'I'll finish my weed first, and then join you, so as to be just in time for the point, if there is one.'

Considering that Tyndall was their host, this refusal was a rudeness to the whole company, of which nobody was more conscious than himself. He not only knew he was doing wrong, but had already repented of it, and was cursing his own hot-headedness in several tropical languages. If

Helen had even looked towards him forgivingly—but her eyes, directly he turned round, had riveted themselves on the table; and 'if he *had* sold himself,' thought he, 'he had not sold himself as a slave; no, by Jove! he hadn't'—and so he stood unmoved—a marble statue with a yearning heart!

'I don't think you *ought* to tell that story, Allardyce—I mean about Jervoise,' remonstrated Adair in a smothered tone, and speaking behind Jones, who sat between them.

'And why not?' replied Allardyce, raising his eyebrows, and speaking in a very contemptuous tone.

'Well, it is not a pleasant story to tell, under the circumstances. You will do as you please, of course; but'—

'Thanks,' interrupted the other insolently—'thanks, I am sure. Having obtained your gracious permission, I *will* tell it;' and he began accordingly: 'Jervoise, of Green Place yonder, was a very good fellow, as I remember him, years ago. He had a little weakness for play, staked high—sometimes higher than he could afford—but mightn't have hurt himself much, had he only stuck to cards.'

'Ah! that's where it is: you get led on,' sighed Mrs Somers, as though quoting from the depth of some terrific gambling experience of her own.

'Just so, madam,' continued Allardyce: 'he took to the turf and the bones.'

'You don't mean to say he murdered anybody?' gasped the old lady, a ghastly vision of clandestine burial, no doubt, suggesting itself to her mind.

'No, no; I mean the race-course and the dice-box; and these two treated him so ill that they would have cost him his whole estate, but for a fortunate marriage.'

Allardyce paused here, perhaps by accident, but, it almost seemed, significantly. Mrs Somers was now as silent as the rest; and Helen's gaze fixed itself on the table more intently than before.

'His bride was a charming girl—one of the Ashleys of Devonshire—but I am afraid Jervoise did not much care for her; still, she was fond of him, and would have put up with a good deal; with anything there was to put up with, perhaps, short of a rival. Unhappily, there *was* a rival.'

'How shocking!' ejaculated Mrs Somers, and yet her voice had a tone of relief in it strangely inconsistent with the words. There was no longer any parallel between this Jervoise case and that of Arthur.

'Yes, and what was worse, it was so soon after their wedding. Mrs Jervoise had cause for jealousy, no doubt, as indeed was proved; but the misfortune was that this unpleasant affair occurred while the Jervoises were in Scotland, and in a moment of very natural indignation, she sued for a divorce in the Scotch courts, and obtained it. Our own Sir Creswell Creswell would not have granted it so easily, which perhaps would have been better for all parties. At all events, Mrs Jervoise soon repented of her precipitancy, and, it is said, made overtures of reconciliation to her late husband.'

'She must have been a very poor-spirited woman,' observed Helen.

Allardyce gave his favourite shrug of the shoulders. 'I don't know, I'm sure. Ladies always seem to me to be much more tender and forgiving than their lords. Jervoise was not forgiving, at



anyrate, though he was tender to another woman; for within six months—during which he had some money left him unexpectedly—he had married somebody else.

'What an abandoned wretch! quite a Bluebeard!' exclaimed Mrs Somers.

'Doubtless; though, I daresay, the "somebody else" did not think so. She was a parson's daughter, and lived not a dozen miles from where we are sitting; and a very pretty girl. Of course, Mrs Jervoise Number One was frantic; and she took her revenge. When Jervoise returned from his marriage-tour—the second honeymoon the monster had had that year, by-the-bye—he gave, like Jones' cousin, "a little dinner," to celebrate his return. The guests were all out upon the lawn enjoying the summer evening, and perhaps Jones' moon—when who should come sailing in among them, with a London lawyer in tow, but the late Mrs Jervoise! "This is my husband," cried she, "and that young person has no sort of business here." And she was right too, or, at all events, partly right. Though the divorce was good in Scotland, it was not so here, since the grounds for separation were not held sufficient by the English law. The matter was never disputed in the Arches Court, because the Jervoises removed to Scotland, where they were man and wife; but he was always called the Man with two Wives. Anybody about here will tell you the same story: it's as well known as the *Swan with two Necks* there, where our men are gone to lunch.'

'And do you mean to say,' inquired Mrs Somers, 'that this wretch was never punished?'

'Yes, indeed; did I not tell you that he was compelled to live in Scotland? Whenever he crosses the Border, wife Number One swoops down upon him, and makes his life a burden. That's why Green Place yonder is always Let. Now, if I had been the first Mrs Jervoise!'

'The barge, Tyndall—the barge!' cried Jack Adair at the top of his voice.

All rose to their feet, and not a moment too soon. A heavily laden coal-barge with three horses, and several men walking beside them, had just turned the corner of the river, and was bearing down upon them very fast. One could see the huge rope quiver in the blue air, and hear it brush the weeds, or tear the turf where the bank was high. The mast of the gay *Lotus*, its gilded cabin, and its painted flagstaff, were all menaced with instant ruin. Tyndall, deep in his own thoughts, and still savagely smoking his cigar, had his back to this terrible vessel, whose approach he had, therefore, not perceived. But he was on his feet in an instant with a 'Stop, you fellows! Stop those horses, or you'll send us all to the bottom!'

'They won't stop,' answered Adair grimly; 'I know them so well. There is only one way to take, and that's to lick them.' He rushed from the cabin, and had already placed one foot on the shore, while Tyndall sprang to his side, when a sweet clear voice sang out: 'Pray, don't, gentlemen.—Arthur, for my sake, I implore you.'

Adair looked to his friend, as if for guidance. The position was indeed critical enough. The horses were already treading on the tow-path close above them; the men, three in number, and very powerful specimens of their class, were tramping by, with a malicious sneer upon their dirt-grimed faces.

'You'll have your figure-head spoiled, if you don't get under cover, young 'oman,' said one, a milder specimen of the river desperado than the rest. His words were addressed to Helen, who was standing by Tyndall's side with her hand laid lightly on his arm. In her hasty exit from the cabin, her hair had escaped from its bands, and was streaming in the wind like a cloud of gold. She might have sat (or stood) for her lover's Guardian Angel.

'For my sake, don't fight those men. It will kill my mother.'

Poor Mrs Somers, speechless from sheer terror, was seconding her prayer from the cabin with outstretched hands; Mr Paul Jones had opened the little door that communicated with the steerage, and curled himself *there*, where he justly calculated no rope could touch him; and the Honourable Wynn Allardyce had thrust his head out of one of the side-windows, in hopes to see a fight.

Arthur looked doubtfully from the barges to Helen, from Helen to the barges. He was exceedingly angry with the latter, and longed to chastise them for their brutality; his dissatisfaction with himself increased his fury against them; and, besides, unless some very strong measure should at once be taken, their pleasure-boat would be knocked to pieces, not to mention the possible danger to life and limb. On the other hand, there was Helen's imploring voice—no longer rebukeful, but sweet and suppliant. What was to be done? Suddenly, an alternative presented itself: he sprang to the luncheon-table, and seized a carving-knife.

'There will be bloodshed,' screamed Mrs Somers, 'gore!—oh, dreadful!'

The next minute, he was holding by the mast with one hand, while the other grasped what seemed to be a flaming sword. A roar of voices from the approaching vessel perforce drew the attention of the three barges on shore, who were plodding on remorselessly. The leader instantly stopped his horse.

'I say, what are you arter, young fellow?'

'I am about to cut your rope, my man,' answered Tyndall coolly; 'that is, if it comes near enough. Pray, go on, if it so pleases you.'

He really looked a handsome fellow, standing up in the sunlight, with his calm bronzed face set so resolutely to keep his word, and his gaze fixed on the now slackening rope. Full of admiration and love, Helen's eyes devoured him. In the height of his passionate fury, her voice had calmed him, and he had obeyed it; and now had not his quick wits devised a plan which bade fair to release them from their perils? She did not know it was a common plan, that is often found to be efficacious with barges, who will never stop for love, and sometimes not even for money. She thought him as wise as he was brave and handsome. For the moment, the *Lotus* was a floating shrine, and Arthur Tyndall the object not only of her love, but of her adoration.

Up crept the grimy barge—no longer terrible, its slackened rope passing from hand to hand over mast and flagstaff—and slid along the gilded galley so closely that the inmates of each could have shaken hands. This was far from their intention, however. Nothing but the resolute attitude of Adair and Tyndall restrained the horny-handed sons of Toil from expressing their opinion of the sons (and daughters) of Pleasure in the strongest

language: their brethren in charge of the horses were already doing so, but fortunately the wind was contrary, and the ladies' ears were spared. Even as it was, though the *Bella* of London passed the *Lotus* without speaking her, the temptation which the gay attire of Mr Paul Jones, still crouching in the stern, offered to the steersman of the former craft, proved too great for his discretion, and he emptied a small sack of coal-dust exactly over him. As the victim had done nothing for the common weal during the late commotion, this outrage was not made a *casus belli*; and in the stern, Mr Paul Jones remained for hours, washing himself, and vainly striving to renovate his apparel. His absence—or rather separation by panel—from the rest of the company did not affect its cheerfulness, which recent events had completely restored. Even Mrs Somers, paralysed as she had been by terror, rallied at the sight of the reconciliation between 'her two young people'; and with the assistance of a glass of green Curaçoa, recommended by Mr Allardyce as a specific for nervous disorders, became herself. Once only did she break down again, when, having the bargees and their threats of vengeance, which had vaguely reached her, still upon her mind, she suddenly exclaimed: 'Great Heavens! there's a man in a black mask levelling a gun at us!'

At these words, Mr Paul Jones came through his panel with the agility of a harlequin at Christmas; and even Mr Allardyce turned his head to look out at window for the assassin. But after all, it was only a photographic artist, who (attracted by their picturesque appearance) had set up his machine upon the bank, and was focusing the *Lotus*. Then the crew came back from the *Swan* with two Necks in a fine state of exhilaration, and off started the faithful steed, this time with the rope attached to him; and away they went, with a surge at the bow and a ripple at the stern, on their river-voyage again.

#### CHRONOGRAMS AND CHRONOPHONS.

THESE two words, identical or nearly identical in meaning, relate to a matter which at one time occupied a good deal of puzzle-making ingenuity, and may perchance again do so, if an imitative freak should seize upon us. When men made no steam-engines, and did not spin cotton at the rate of a thousand miles or so per hour; when they neither travelled by railway over the land, nor by screw and paddle over the sea; when there were no penny posts, electric telegraphs, penny papers, or gas-lights; when men did not give three thousand guineas for a picture about 'Roast Pig,' or three hundred for an old fiddle—then it was that verbal crotchets were in fashion to an extent that we can hardly understand now. In France, especially, during the dissipated reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. the 'gilded youth' of the gay capital, and aristocrats old enough to have known better, whiled away their hours in such fashion to an almost incredible degree, incited partly thereto by the epigrammatic qualities of the French language.

The chronogram, or 'description by means of numbers,' is rather antiquarian and ecclesiastical than gay in its origin. Perhaps it may be more correctly defined as 'date-writing'—the incorporating a date as part of a written word or sentence. It depends on the main characteristics of the Roman

numerals. We are all told at school that our usual numerals, such as 1, 2, 3, 4, are of Arabic origin; but that the Romans employed some of the capital letters of their alphabet as numbers. There are seven in familiar use—namely, I, V, X, L, C, D, M, standing respectively for 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1000; but there are others, found in old documents, which are now seldom used—especially a capital C turned upside down (Ↄ), and a sort of figure of 8 laid on its side (∞). One extraordinary combination, to denote a million, stands thus—CCCCIↃↃↃↃ; and another, only a little less complex, for a hundred thousand—CCCCIↃↃↃ. In order to denote four, the Romans occasionally used I four times repeated—IIII; but a briefer form was IV, which stands for 'one less than five'; in like manner XL and CD were devised instead of XXXX and CCCC, for forty and four hundred. Sixteen years hence, in 1888, the A.D. when expressed in Roman numerals of the usual kind, will be more lengthy than it has ever before been, or than it will again be for a long time to come—namely, MDCCCLXXXVIII—thirteen symbols instead of the convenient four which suffice when Arabic numerals are used.

In some languages, a sentence will express a date or number whether the writer intends it or not. Thus, learned men tell us that, in Persian, the letters forming the words 'Hooshung Shah is no more,' also denote the number 837; and a chronogram was at once thus constructed, seeing that Shah Hooshung died in the 837th year of the Hegira. In like manner, many of the controversies and speculations concerning the mysterious 66 and 666 of the Book of Revelation have arisen out of the Hebrew alphabetical characters being alike letters and numerals.

The Romans are believed to have begun the style of chronogram which has more or less been in favour ever since. It was an amusement, a play upon words something like our rebus. We all remember such effusions as XL, which will serve either for 40 or for 'excel' in a puzzle; and MIX, which will do alike for 1009 and for 'mix'—and doubtless we deemed ourselves very clever in composing them.

Chronograms are rather numerous in and about churches and other religious structures, comprising pious sentences, often passages from the Bible. Tourists have detected many of them in the Rhenish provinces, in some instances placed in odd corners and nooks not very visible, and often partly obliterated by time and weather. Some are incised or cut in the stone-work, others painted or gilt on wood. Instances have been met with on a beam in a chapel on the south side of the choir of Cologne Cathedral; on the base of a crucifix outside the minster at Bonn, and another within the minster; in Poppelsdorf church, near the same city; on the baptistery at Aix-la-Chapelle; on the front of the west gallery at St Michael's Church, in the same city; round the arch of the west door of St Castor's, Coblenz; on the base of a crucifix, and over the principal door of a church, at Königswinter; and in many other places. There is one on the floor of the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Rome, comprising a date relating to the English Jacobite princes in 1721; and on a fountain near the church of San Paolo, at Parma, is one to the honour of one of the vice-regents of that state. Our own country is not wanting in

instances of the same kind. Thus, in Winchester Cathedral, on the roof which conceals the old lantern tower from the choir, is a chronogram recording the date and circumstances of the construction, in 1635. On an oaken wall-plate in the porch of Brockthorpe Church, Gloucestershire, is one to denote the year of the decapitation of Charles I. and even the day and the period of the day, 'on the thirtieth of January's setting sun.' In Albury Church is an epitaph on George Duncombe, who died in 1646, a date denoted by the capital letters mixed up with others in the following words: 'ResVrgent eX lsto pVLVerē qVI lbl sepVLtI DorMIVnt.' Let us analyse this a little, and see how it is built up. The first R is the initial capital at the beginning of the sentence, and does not count; all the other capitals denote numerals; while V, as a numeral (5), has to do duty both for u and for v, if either or both of those letters happen to take part in the sentence. Printed in ordinary type, the epitaph makes its appearance in a Latin form familiar to those who are conversant with this class of inscriptions: 'Resurgens ex isto pulvere qui ibi sepulti dormiunt.' The thick capitals, taken in the order in which they stand, are: VXIVLVIIIIVLIDMIV; but rearranged in the order of their dignity or relative importance, they are: MDLXXVVVVV IIIIII—rather a lengthened way of saying 1646.

Coins, medals, and other articles are often to be met with bearing a chronogram stamped or engraved on them. After the opening of a gold mine in Sicily, in 1734, coins were struck to celebrate the event; and the Latin motto, 'Ex visceribus meis hæc funditur,' borne on each coin, by converting u into v, and using thick letters for XVCIIVMIC VDIV, managed to denote the above-mentioned date. On the upper border of a sun-dial, existing some years ago on the west end of Nantwich Church, Cheshire, was a chronogram celebrating the coronation of Charles II. in 1661: 'Honor Domino pro pace populo suo parte;' the significant letters here can easily be discriminated. Over the door of Sherborne School, Dorsetshire, is (or was) a chronogram with the significant letters rubricated, or painted in red. The whole of it relates to the foundation of the school; while the rubricated letters give the date 1670.

The same conceit used sometimes to be followed by, or for, well-to-do families, in mottoes for articles of domestic use. Thus, a damask table-napkin has been described, which contains a motto woven into the linen fabric: 'SigenVM paClis DatVr LorICæ,' to celebrate the conclusion of peace between England and France in 1763, after seven years' hostilities. In a paper by Addison in the *Spectator*, relating to the verbal puzzles which were in fashion in the seventeenth century, he gave an instance of a chronogram, shewed how it was constructed, and pretty plainly hinted his small estimation of such productions: 'This kind of wit appears very often on many modern medals, especially those of Germany, when they represent in the inscription the year in which they were coined. Thus we see on a medal of Gustavus Adolphus the following words: "ChrIstVs DuX ergo triVMphVs." If you take the pains to pick the figures out of the several words, and range them in their proper order, you will find they amount to MDCXVVVII, or 1627, the year in which the medal was stamped; for, as some of

the letters distinguish themselves from the rest, and overtop their fellows, they are to be considered in a double capacity, both as letters and as figures. Your laborious German wits will turn over a whole dictionary for one of these ingenious devices. A man would think they are searching after an apt classical term; but instead of that, they are looking out a word that has an L, an M, or a D in it. When, therefore, we meet with any of these inscriptions, we are not so much to look in them for the thought as for the year of the Lord.'

Addison might have found abundant illustrations of his meaning in books as well as in medals. The title-pages, prefaces, dedications, and endings of books have often been made to shew a date in the form of a chronogram, relating either to a person honoured in the book, or to the year in which the book was printed. Whether it occurred in any book, as one among the many adulatory compliments to Queen Elizabeth, we do not know; but a chronogram purports to say, 'My Day is Closed In Immortality,' denoting the year of Elizabeth's decease, 1603. Shakespeare, in Elizabeth's time, unquestionably knew something about chronograms (What did he not know something about?), for, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. Scene 2, Holofernes made one of his quips and oddities available in this way in his droll colloquy with Sir Nathaniel and Dull. He takes praise for this and other *jeux d'esprit*, which his companions deem surpassingly good. 'This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions.' His mode of making letters serve for numerals comes out thus:

If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores; O  
sore L!  
Of one sore I an hundred make, by adding but one  
more L.

The seventeenth century was very busy in the production of these effusions. One, running thus, 'GeorgIVs DVX BVCKInghamIæ,' records the year in which the duke was murdered by Felton, 1628. The Rev. G. Gippes, rector of Elston, in Lincolnshire, preached a Fast Sermon before the House of Commons in 1644; he published it in the following year, with a preface containing a chronogram, in which a well-known passage from the Bible is slightly altered, and made to denote the year 1644—namely, 'GoD Is oVr refVge, oVr strength, a heLpe In troVbLes Verle aboVnDant VVe InDe.' The peculiarity here is, that W is represented in the old form VV, which enables the computer to count ten for it. About the close of the reign of Charles I., many royalists insisted that the end of the world was nearly at hand. One of them fixed on the year 1645 in the following fashion: 'Adventus Domini,' by capitalising certain of the letters, denotes 2012; 'dies abbreviuntur' gave him 517; while 'propter electas' gave 150. Then he argued that 517 taken from 2012 leaves 1495, to which, if 150 be added, the sum gives 1645. We can only say, that if the reader is satisfied with this, his satisfaction is easily brought about. The flattery of the hapless monarch was a favourite subject with chronogram-makers. The 'iniquitous condemnation of a pious king and good shepherd,'

ReX pIVs et greX VerVs  
ConDeMnantVr InIqVe,

was made to denote the year of his execution. In Fuller's *Worthies*, we find a record of the death of Bishop Prideaux, so printed as to give the date 1650.

In the year when the fourth series of *Notes and Queries* was commenced, one of the correspondents celebrated the event with a chronogram, bringing in the well-known motto of that excellent periodical, and the year 1868: 'When found, make a note of—Captain Cuttle: Long live it;' or, printed chronogramatically, 'When foVnD, Make a note of—CaptAIn CVttLe: Long LIvE It.' If the reader could so manipulate the title of the present Journal as to make it denote the year when the Journal first appeared (1832), or the number of years it has existed (forty), he would form some idea of the kind of knack called for in the concoction of these curiosities.

## P E T.

Is there 'nothing in a name?'  
Bah! the text is trite and tame,  
And as false as fleeting Fame—

The coquette.  
For my pearl of pretty women,  
'Twere a thought of evil omen  
To suggest another nomen  
Than my 'Pet.'

True, her own is very jolly,  
For a nicer name than Polly  
To desire, were simply folly;  
But 'tis nature  
To rechristen what, alone,  
In one's heart of hearts has grown,  
And affection hath its own  
Nomenclature.

And should any cynic doubt  
That the Nature pedants flout,  
Knoweth best what she's about,  
I would hint  
That the prig should take a peep  
At my Sylph, in pickles deep,  
At my Peri in the cheap  
Purple 'print.'

Did you ever see such hair?  
(All her own, sir), or a pair  
Of such eyes? Nay, that I'll swear  
You did not.

But perhaps you don't believe  
In the beauty Mother Eve  
To her lineage did leave  
As *their* lot

In the lottery of life?  
Well, we will not stoop to strife  
On the point; my little wife  
Can compete  
In the *nous* that rules a house,  
With your sandy-headed spouse,  
Though she hasn't such a nose,  
Or such feet.

It is true her hair is sunny,  
Of the hue of virgin honey,  
Soft as silk, and, what is funny,  
Seldom 'rumpling.'  
But you're very much mistaken,  
If you think her nerves are shaken  
At the sight of beans and bacon,  
Or a dumpling.

It is also very true  
That her eyes are pansy-blue—  
Not an unbecoming hue,  
I conceive;

But, though bright, and most bewitching,  
They are sharp and stern at stitching,  
Though her fingers may be itching  
For reprieve.

Though her lips compare alone  
With that ruddy cherry, grown  
Down in Kent, and meet my own  
Very sweetly—  
If you fancy they are fit  
But for kissing, sir, your wit  
Shooteth wide, and fails to hit  
Most completely.

What! You really can't conceive  
Such a dainty household Eve;  
You're unable to believe

In my 'Pet?'  
Fancy Psyche frilling frocks,  
Or the Graces darning socks,  
Or the Muses with their locks  
In a net?

Ah! your super-silly sneer  
Is excusable, I fear;  
Could you see my dainty dear  
As she flits  
Through the mazes of the dance  
With 'our *émigré*'—from France—  
Hear the sparkle and the glance  
Of their wits:

Could you see her as she moves  
O'er the lawn, her little loves  
Of white hands in garden gloves  
Close encased—  
With a newly gathered rose  
To her classic little nose,  
And an arm of—some one—close  
Round her waist:

Could you see her as she sings,  
When the evening's dusky wings  
Shadow all sublunar things,  
Or, alone,  
Changing looks and low replies,  
In my loving arms she lies;  
While her tender trustful eyes  
Seek mine own—

Then, my sharp and sceptic friend,  
You your maxim might amend,  
That a woman's chiefest end  
Is the pantry;  
You might stint your dull amaze,  
That a pretty partner 'pays,'  
Though her form might win the praise  
Of a Chantry.

You might understand, perchance,  
That a houri who can dance,  
And whose eye's bewitching glance  
Is so bright,  
May in 'faculty' be rich;  
And a winsome little witch  
Be as good at stew, or stitch,  
As a fright.

You—but listen; it is she  
Who is calling me to tea;  
From my books awhile I flee  
Sans regret.  
See! a goddess making toast!  
In herself she is a host;  
She's my darling—she's my bonst—  
She's my 'Pet.'



